

It's just some rain by **kaity_23**

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Summary:

Mike and El visit Ted in Indianapolis for dinner. A storm causes them to stop on the way home and stay the night at a motel, even though Mike told Hopper that he would return his daughter to him that night. The motel proves to be... the worst motel in the universe.

It's just some rain

Author's Note:

These terrible motel things actually happened to me! All except for the vending machine thing. Literally all of those terrible things happened to me at one hotel I stayed at, just over the course of that one visit. There were also car alarms going off all the time, sketchy people hanging outside exchanging brown paper bags, a footprint on the elevator wall.... it was actually the worst. It sounds like like something someone would make up, but I swear it really happened to me.

He told Hopper that they would be gone for an afternoon. He told Jim Hopper that he would have his daughter home that night. He promised chief of police, Jim Hopper, a man who owns many guns, that he would return his daughter to him safe and sound, by 10 pm. Jim understood why Mike wanted El to come with him. Seeing Ted was hard. He needed someone to be there, and no one could provide Mike with the same kind of security and comfort that El could. At the dinner table, Ted just ate and stared at the television (carefully placed so that he could always see it from his new spot at his new home at the dinner table).

“Do you even miss us?” Mike blurted out.

“Of course I miss you.” He said, mouth full of food. “Why do you think I invited you over?” His voice was monotone, and his eyes quickly turned back to the television. His jaw rowed back and forth as he vigorously chewed on his steak. He took a drink of his milk. All while still looking at the TV.

Mike took a long, deep breath through his nose. He glared at his father, but he didn't even care enough to see. What he wanted to say was;

If you had been a better father, maybe you could still be with us, in Hawkins. If you had actually cared about my science fairs, if you asked me about DnD once, if you watched Star Wars with me, if you cared enough to give me one glance while I was still holding onto hope that you would be better, maybe I wouldn't hate being here

right now as much as I do. Maybe I would believe that what you just said isn't a lie.

He didn't want to fight, not in front of El. He just looked at her, sitting next to him, and reached for her hand under the dinner table. She always understands.

Once dinner was done, they said a quick goodbye to Ted and started the drive home.

Jonathan had sent with them off with a mixtape he made especially for them, for this trip. He included only the cheesiest love songs. El loved them, and Mike loved that they made El smile, but he hated Jonathan for including some of the more... suggestive ones.

The sky was filled with dark clouds, and it started to rain.

She glanced at Mike. He took one hand off of the steering wheel and reached for hers, taking hold of it and resting their hands on the middle console. Storms sometimes still scared her, triggered her panic.

"It's just some rain." He rubbed the back of her hand with his thumb.

The rain turned into a downpour, and the wind tried to throw them back and forth. Lightening cracked every few seconds and thunder roared.

He pulled the car into the first motel with a vacancy sign. He just couldn't keep the car on the road, and he could tell that El was starting to panic; she was trying to hide it from him, but he could always tell when something was wrong.

It was supposed to be warm, so El didn't bring a jacket. Mike had one though, so he grabbed it from the back seat once he parked, got out and ran to her door, and covered her with it as they bee-lined for the door. It was only a few yards – but they both were soaking wet. The jacket hadn't done much.

The receptionist looked up from her novel above her glasses and took a long sip from her soda. She stared at the two rain-soaked kids and didn't say a word.

"Um... Can I use your phone?" Said Mike.

"Line got knocked out." She took another sip and looked back at her novel.

El glanced, unsure, at Mike.

"Okay... Well... We need a room."

She eyed them.

"You need a double?... Or a single?"

Mike's cheeks went slightly red. El looked confused.

The woman rolled her eyes.

"One bed or two?" She asked.

El recalled when she and Mike had fallen asleep on the same bed. It had happened a few times.

"One." She said without hesitation.

Mike's face turned into a deeper shade of red, and the woman gave them a key.

Mike held the jacket over El again as they made their way to their room.

Mike started to nervously pace around and El sat on the edge of the (one) bed, fiddling with her fingers.

"I can't even call him and tell him why you're not home. He's going to kill me, El."

She reached out and grabbed his hand, stopping him mid-pace.

"No, he won't. He will understand." She dipped her head and gave him a slight smile.

He sat down next to her, still letting her hold his hand.

At just 17, he couldn't believe that he had already found the person who he knew would be the love of his life. When he watched his parents marriage fall apart (can something fall apart if it wasn't ever really put together?), he worried that all of the love stories were just carefully fabricated lies, but as he looked at this curly haired girl with big brown eyes, holding his hand, he wasn't afraid.

"El -" before he could say anything else, lightening from outside lit up the whole room. Thunder followed and made El flinch. She closed her eyes hard, trying to stop the panic.

El's hand gripped Mike's so hard that her knuckles went white.

He pulled her into him.

"You're okay. You're safe."

Some days, storms were fine. After all, she had spent a few months out in the midst of snow and cold, eating whatever she could find.

Some days, storms were not fine.

She nuzzled her head into his chest and let his warmth comfort her.

They sat there for a few moments, until El lifted her head and creased her brow.

"It smells weird in here." She said, scrunching her nose.

"It does..." He agreed.

"Also I'm very hungry." She said. Mike's stomach, in perfect timing,

grumbled in agreement.

"I think I saw a vending machine in the lobby. I'll go get something."

Mike made his way to the door, preparing to brave the storm.

"I'll be right back." He put his hand on the door handle, and realized a millisecond too late that the pullover lock was still on. The door opened though. The lock fell completely off.

"Oh my gosh..." Mike said. El just widened her eyes and opened her mouth in shock.

"I'll just... put it on the counter." And by counter, Mike meant the little tiny space in the motel room's tiny "kitchen" that separated the sink and the stove top. They didn't notice until then that the wall adjacent to the stove top had brown burn marks.

Mike found the vending machine. Only it didn't have things like chips, or candy bars, or you know, normal snacks. It had plain white packages with bold black lettering. The options included "PRETZELS", "BEEF MEAL", and "CHOCOLATE FLAVORING". He bought some... pretzels? Hopefully?

When he returned, El wasn't on the bed and the bathroom door was closed, so Mike waited, inspecting the "PRETZELS", and trying to figure out if this was something he actually wanted El to ingest into her body.

"I'm back, El." He called.

"Okay." She answered, then paused. "Um... Mike?"

"Yeah?"

"Come look at this." The bathroom door creaked open and light flooded onto the floor in front of it. Mike stood up, but hesitated. He slowly came over, remembering that first night when she had almost stripped naked in front of him, Lucas, and Dustin. She remembered that day too. So she was wrapped in a towel.

Mike followed her eyes to the ceiling above the shower. Pieces of the ceiling had fallen into the bath and he could actually see pipes, slowly dripping. He bent down and picked up the fallen pieces of ceiling.

"Mike, is this dangerous?" Something like this had happened at home. Hopper told her not to take a shower for awhile in that bathroom until he could fix it. He said that it could electrocute her.

"I think it's okay." He said. "Yeah, it should be fine." He frowned.

He sat on the bed, listening to the rain fall hard still outside and to

the water running in El's shower. He stood up and turned the tiny television on. The first thing to show up was a strange image of some lines... he thought he had seen something like that at the hospital. It was like... one of those earthquake measuring things, maybe? It was like that thing that he saw record Will's brain activity in the lab those times when he had come with him.

He was confused and slightly terrified.

He switched the channel and the first words he heard were "...may they rest in peace..." and his eyes saw about six men standing over about six other men who were apparently dead.

He decided to turn the television off. He sat back down and began examining these "PRETZELS", and ate one. He ate a few. He ate half the package. He decided that they were safe for El to eat. He was nodding his head at this decision when she walked out of the bathroom, her long hair wet. It grew fast and she liked it long, so she kept it that way. Plus she loved how it felt when Nancy braided her hair.

She wrapped her arms around herself and shivered. She was wearing just her tee shirt and her jeans.

"Where's your sweater?" He asked.

"It's soaking wet"

He immediately started to take his own sweater off.

"Mike, that's sweet, but yours is soaking wet too -"

However, as he lifted his sweater off, he revealed yet another sweater, perfectly dry. He took the second one off to reveal only a tee shirt.

"Mike, you don't have to-"

He stood up and tried to manually put it on her. It was not as easy as he thought it would be, and as soon as El accepted that he was not going to let her not wear his sweater, she took it and put it on herself.

The storm's winds had put a good chill in the room. He had tried to turn the heat up, but only cold blew out of the radiator.

"I know it's cold, but I couldn't find extra blankets, you'll just have to use this one that's on the bed."

She untucked the top sheet and only found another sheet.

"... What blanket?" She asked.

"Wow... I don't think that this hotel could get any worse..."

Just as he said this, his eyes fell on the floor to a small pile of some sort of white powder. And next to it was a small brown lump.

He pursed his lips and took a deep breath.

She still held the sheet up, just staring at it, wishing that it would just magically transform into a blanket.

Suddenly a huge crack of lightening lit up the whole room, and the thunder roared. El jumped, the lights flickered, and she gripped the sheet until her knuckles turned white, again.

She had been doing so good. She had gotten better at dealing with the storms. She no longer needed Hopper to stay in her room whenever there was a storm. She no longer jumped every time she saw any small flash of lightening. But this one caught her off guard, and now Mike was staring at her, concerned.

"I'm fine." She said, forcing a smile.

Another huge boom from outside and the lights flickered again. She had also come a long way from affecting her surroundings when using her powers. She no longer broke windows when she screamed or flickered lights when she tried to find someone. But this time she was caught with a bit of blood under her nose.

"El..."

"It's okay Mike." She tried to smile. "I'm okay."

"... Okay."

"Did you find any food?" She said as she wiped her nose and settled down on the bed under the sheet.

He sat down next to her on top of the sheet, resting his back against the headboard. He handed them to her and they sat there in silence as El finished them off.

She handed over the empty package, and as Mike's arm came into her vision, she noticed his goosebumps.

"Mike," she gave him that stare. "you are going to freeze to death. Get under here." She lifted the sheet up.

He glanced at her, then fixed his gaze on the sheet. They had slept near each other before; usually a result from movie nights with the party. They had even slept on the same bed on a few occasions. But these were always accidental, just a result of two sleepy teens who happened to be hanging out with each other. They were never sleeping this close before, let alone under the same blanket... or sheet, rather.

He placed the wrapper on the bedside table.

He lifted up the sheet, glanced at her again, and scootched in. They settled down, resting their heads on the pillows, facing each other.

Immediately, her warmth draped all around him, and he smiled,

closed his eyes, and sighed.

Mike still had his eyes closed. He was afraid of how what would happen if he looked at her – if she would get uncomfortable or if it would get awkward.

But El's eyes were wide open, studying his face. His eyelashes rested gently on top of his freckled cheeks. His face, especially his cheeks, had a rosy glow of warmth. She looked at his arms and saw that his goosebumps were gone.

His black curls fell, unruly, all around his face. He had tamed it for most of his childhood, but now it was just a heap curls, with a mind of its own.

She tentatively reached out and curled a piece between her fingers.

She saw his lips curl up in a smile, slightly, and his cheeks grew a deeper shade of pink.

She looked at his arms again, and his goosebumps reappeared.

She smiled, satisfied, and closed her eyes.

Mike opened his.

My turn.

He draped his arm on top of her and pulled her close to him, holding her.

He felt the hitch in her breath, and then he felt her muscles relax. He felt her body sink into the bed, as if it were suddenly made of clouds.

He found himself mimicking her.

Her head rested against his chest, right under his chin. He felt her warm breath on his chest.

It was just so warm, so right, being here, this close.

That night Mike dreamed of Jim Hopper murdering him.